



K_KULU KE EA A KANALOA

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PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. NAVY TO RETURN ISLAND OF KAHO'OLawe TO HAWAII

For the first time since becoming a state, Hawai'i will control all its territory

Honolulu, HI—Beginning at noon on November 12, 2003, an observance will be held at Iolani Palace to mark the transfer of responsibility for the Island of Kaho'olawe from the U.S. Navy to the people of Hawai'i. After more than 50 years of federal control, access to the island will be managed by the State of Hawai'i through its commission, the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC). The formal program will be preceded by a cultural ceremony at the 'Ahu on the Palace grounds at 11:30.

In attendance at the ceremonies will be members of Hawai'i's congressional delegation, representatives of the U.S. Navy, the governor and members of her administration, representatives of the State Legislature, trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the mayor of Maui County and key Maui Council members, the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana, Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, and other distinguished individuals involved with Kaho'olawe. The public is welcome to attend.

Ten years ago, on November 11, 1993, Title 10 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1994 took effect. Title 10 required the Navy to convey title of Kaho'olawe to the State of Hawai'i on May 7, 1994, and authorized \$400 million for the Navy to undertake a cleanup of the island.

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Notwithstanding the state's ownership of Kaho'olawe, the act gave the Navy control of the island during the 10-year cleanup period, which ends on November 11, 2003. However, because Veterans Day falls on November 11 this year, precluding attendance by key government participants, the observance of the transfer of control was moved to November 12.

November 11 also marks the ending of the current phase of cleanup activities on Kaho'olawe. To this end, \$18 million was appropriated by Congress for the Navy to finalize its clearance operations and demobilize from the island. These activities are anticipated to be completed by March 12, 2004. During this time, the KIRC will be finalizing operational procedures and protocols for management and use of the island its surrounding waters.

This transition period, as the Navy departs and the KIRC assumes control, will not be easy or simple and will require the coordinated and focused efforts of both the Navy and the KIRC. The KIRC, therefore, will be restricting access to the island to only a limited number of activities. Under KIRC management, these activities will include continued restoration of the island's environmental and cultural resources.

Overall, the transfer of control gives KIRC commissioners a strong sense of homecoming and anticipated opportunity for the Hawaiian community and all the people of Hawai'i. The KIRC will soon be initiating a public information and outreach campaign to inform people about the processes and protocols involved in accessing the island.

The campaign is intended to increase public awareness of the island as a cultural and educational resource, as well as the opportunities and dangers presented by the island in its current condition. It is also intended to build support for additional restoration of the island's cultural and environmental heritage and inform the public about plans for the island's future.

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